

The University of Chicago

**THE INFLUENCE OF THE POLITICAL
CRISES ON FRENCH PARTIES
1885-1889**

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE
SOCIAL SCIENCES IN CANDIDACY FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

1933

**By
VESTA C. SWEITZER**

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Although the Third Republic was proclaimed in 1870 and provided with organic laws in 1875, the Republicans were not securely established in all branches of the government (the chamber of deputies, the senate, and the presidency) until 1879. Even then there were two serious problems which seriously threatened the stability of the French government: the rivalry of the various Republican parties, and the unwillingness of the Right to accept the Republic as the permanent form of government.

The Republicans had originally been organized in a single group which first appeared in the last years of the Second Empire, and their program was decidedly radical in tone. When, however, they actually secured the power, Conservative, Moderate, and Radical Republican parties made their appearance. The Conservative Republicans (Left Center) whose economic and social program differed little from that of the Monarchists, were very strong in the early days of the Republic, but they gradually gave way to the more advanced parties. The Moderates did not reject the original program, but their willingness to limit themselves to reforms which were practicable at the moment, gained them the name of "Opportunists." Only the Radicals wished to maintain the original platform intact. In addition to this split over principles, there was further division in each group over leadership; each main section disintegrated into smaller factions dominated by a particular politician. Moreover, these groups were loosely organized and shifted very easily, nor did the parties in the senate coincide with those in the chamber.

The groups of the Right suffered gradual disruption. The Bonapartists were the largest and strongest of the Monarchical factions in 1871, but the death of the son of Napoleon III in 1879 created a schism which left control in the hands of two incompetent leaders. Moreover, the finances of this party were inadequate for the pursuance of "high politics" and they played only a secondary role. Of more importance were the Orleanists. In 1883, the death of the legitimist pretender without heirs resulted in the fusion of his followers with the Orleanists, who supported the Comte de Paris, grandson of Louis Philippe. The group was increased by many Bonapartists disgusted by their own party, and plenty of money was available. These Royalists lacked competent leadership, however, for neither the Comte de Paris nor his advisers possessed many of the qualities of statesmanship.

A comparison of Republican platforms with the accomplishments from 1879 to 1885 indicates that more had been promised than was achieved. The Monarchists made the most of this situation and bitterly denounced the incapacity of the Republican government. Ministerial instability, also, was a prominent feature of Republican control from the beginning. Jules Ferry, a Moderate who had become premier in 1883, suddenly lost his majority when news was received that French troops had been defeated in an expedition against Tonkin. He was replaced by a weak compromise ministry which satisfied no one. To make the situation even more difficult, by 1885 a severe panic gradually enveloped French economic life.

These conditions naturally affected the general elections for the chamber which were held in the fall of 1885. A measure supported by all the parties substituted voting by departments (scrutin de liste) for voting by single member districts (scrutin

d'arrondissement). The elections of 1885 were carried out under this system and resulted in a division of the parties that was an extremely important factor in the developments of the ensuing four years. The chamber was divided into three nearly equal groups. The Conservatives who had been very energetic gained two hundred seats, thus doubling their representation of 1881. The Radicals, who had controlled only forty-six seats in 1881, were returned one hundred and eighty strong. The Moderates were reduced to two hundred members. Both the Conservative and Radical parties expected to gain a great deal during the life of this chamber, and both groups refused to make any long-enduring compromise with the Moderates. A parliamentary majority could be attained only by a union of two of these factions, and the difficulty of arranging this provided a background for the Boulangist crisis.

When the weak ministry which had presided over the elections resigned in December, 1885, a temporary agreement between the Moderates and a section of the Radicals was arranged by the adroit Charles de Freycinet, an advanced Moderate, by which several Radicals were included in the ministry, among them an obscure soldier, General Boulanger, who was made the minister of war. For a year (1886), the Freycinet ministry unsuccessfully attempted to placate all sections of the Republican party. Although the Conservatives suffered from internal dissension, they were unanimous in obstructing and blocking the measures of the government.

Public interest during this period was less attracted by the sterile rivalries of the political parties than by the activities of the handsome minister of war. General Boulanger was the youngest and best-looking general of division in the army; he had seen action in several campaigns, had been wounded four times, and had been frequently cited for bravery. Some of the Radicals

especially Clemenceau, became interested in him as the only Republican general, and procured him a position in the ministry. As war minister he always upheld the policies of the Radicals and won much applause from them in the chamber. He also did much to improve the lot of the common soldier. The many public speeches that he made everywhere in France revealed him as a sincere but flowery patriot, and his comments on the satisfactory condition of the army made him appear the very apostle of revenge against Germany. In actual fact, although he did have tremendous energy, it was of the "bustling" sort, which was incapable of planning long campaigns or adopting any consistent or farsighted policy. His intentions were good, but these were counteracted by vanity, shallowness, inconsistency, and inability to judge men. But the people liked him, and his popularity became a topic of general discussion after the annual military fete on July 14, 1886, when Boulanger received more applause than either the premier or the president of France. Toward the end of the year, however, his popularity began to decline, and the press gave him much less space. The Radicals continued to remain loyal to him, however. The Conservatives disliked him from the beginning, and by the summer of 1886, many of the Moderates were disgusted with his circus-master methods.

Boulanger's popularity was revived in January, 1887, when Bismarck, speaking in the Reichstag, mentioned the danger to Germany, should Boulanger secure control of France. This was only one of the series of incidents which created so much tension between France and Germany at this period that many feared that the outcome could only be war. The Moderate Republicans did their utmost to maintain peace, and decided that the flighty general must be removed from the war office. Goblet, the Radical who had

replaced Freycinet as premier in December, 1886, had had considerable difficulty with the Extreme Left and the Right, and was not too displeased when his government was overthrown in May, 1887. After a long ministerial crisis in which the Radicals stubbornly supported General Boulanger, Rouvier, a Moderate, finally constituted a ministry with the support of the Right, who agreed to refrain from opposition if General Boulanger and the Radicals were left out of the government. The earlier coöperation between the Moderates and Radicals was known as "concentration"; this new combination of Moderates and Conservatives was called "pacification."

Boulanger was sent to command a garrison at a considerable distance from Paris. He kept himself before the public as much as he could, but again he was gradually forgotten. The Radicals now became the principal opponents of the ministry, but Rouvier was able to handle the situation until the revelations of the Decorations scandal in the autumn of 1887.

It was discovered, at that time, that high army officers were selling appointments to the Legion of Honor. Shortly afterwards the son-in-law of President Grevy was involved. The Right considered this opportunity to cast disgrace on the Republic too good to miss, and they abandoned the ministry. Rouvier was soon forced to resign and it was generally considered that President Grevy ought to send in his resignation also. The Radicals who feared that Ferry, the hated Opportunist who supported imperialism, might be elected, made a last desperate effort to save Grevy, but they were unsuccessful in their attempts to form a ministry, and the eighty-one year old president reluctantly resigned. He was replaced by Sadi-Carnot, a man of integrity who came of a family long prominent in French politics. Carnot chose as his premier

a Moderate, who constituted a ministry of affairs which proved no more successful than the cabinets which had preceded it.

This ministry was primarily troubled with the development of political Boulangism. The general had not been happy at his distant post, for he missed the excitement and delights of Paris. His one ambition was to regain his position as minister of war. He broke with most of the Radical party in the summer of 1887, and his new friends were a small group of men who assisted him in the creation of much purposeless propaganda. The idea of a Boulangist party was first conceived by Thiebaud, a young Bonapartist. He interested Boulanger in a by-election for the chamber, and with funds given by the general, Thiebaud organized a committee and conducted a campaign which resulted in over fifty thousand votes being cast for Boulanger. The ministry became excited; Boulanger was first retired and then dismissed from the army (March, 1899). This made him eligible to the chamber of deputies.

Soon a permanent Boulangist committee was formed. Most of its members were discontented Radicals with some ability and more ambition. Comte Dillon, a business man with a cloudy reputation, became its treasurer and campaign manager. Other important members were Thiebaud, Henri Rochefort, the leading journalist of the movement, and the ardent president of the Patriotic League, Paul Deroulede. Great care was used by Naquet, a Radical senator on the committee, in drafting the platform of this new party. Because it included so many varieties of individuals and opinions, the program had to be vague, yet it could not be absolutely meaningless. The platform evolved was almost perfect because it could be summarized in a simple slogan, "Dissolution, Revision, Constituent Assembly": the existing chamber must be dissolved, then

an elected assembly would revise the constitution. No Boulangist ever stated definitely what this revision should be - the will of the people alone could determine that. It was generally believed that a government with a strong executive would be installed with, perhaps, Boulanger as president, but there was nothing to prove that such was the case. Undoubtedly the Boulangists were opportunists and preferred to see what situation would arise.

The National Committee lacked finances to conduct much of a campaign. Arthur Meyer, a self-made journalist who had earlier changed from Bonapartism to Orleanism, became interested in the possibilities of the new movement. He was not the first member of the Right to do so, for Boulanger had had some futile conversations with a few Royalist leaders in December, 1887, and in January, 1888, Thiebaud had taken the general to Switzerland to visit Prince Jerome Napoleon Bonaparte. Meyer was more successful. He arranged a meeting with Dillon and secured help from the Orleanest Duchesse d'Uzes who ultimately gave three million francs to the cause of General Boulanger. Even the Comte de Paris was persuaded to sanction the movement. That pretender, who had not scorned Legitimism (1873), now accepted the plebiscite (September, 1887), and in the spring of 1888, approved the plans of a political general. Royalist political theory during these years was not very consistent. The Count later excused his relations with Boulanger by admitting his willingness to use any method that might have brought the Orleanists into power. The Royalists not only financed the Boulangist movement but refrained from opposing rival candidates against the general. The two Bonapartist factions also supported Boulangism.

It is not easy to determine how much the National Committee knew about these negotiations or what had been promised in return.

Publicly, all relationship was denied. It is true that some of the members did not know the details until much later, but others were not so innocent as they pretended to be. Dillon, of course, was the only person to receive the money from the Royalists and the only person who worked with them. Boulanger certainly knew about the negotiations and he may have been influenced by the Orleanist leanings of his friend Dillon, and his mistress, Marguerite de Bonnemains. There can be no question of the sincerity of his devotion to France, but his ideas on government were very vague, and Royalist society delighted him. It is probable that the assistance promised to the Orleanists never officially included anything more than a promise to put the question of government to the people.

By May, 1888, the Boulangist party was established with a permanent organization and a well-stocked treasury. All the groups of the Right gave the general some measure of support. The Republicans, however, were almost unanimously against him. Nevertheless, this general opposition to General Boulanger did not bring Republican union, and the quarrel between the Radicals and the Moderates continued. The failure of all possible ministerial combinations gave the Radicals their opportunity to establish a ministry in April, 1888. Floquet, the Radical premier, had an easier time than his predecessors, because, although, the dozen Boulangists and the Right made a formidable opposition, he no longer had to fear their union with a Republican group to overthrow him. The Moderates did not care to defeat the Radical cabinet under the uncertain conditions that existed. Thus, the most pressing problem of the new ministry concerned the Boulangist electoral campaign.

Whether the Boulangists intended a plebiscite or not,

they were indiscreet enough to talk about one, and it was generally believed that such was their purpose. Boulanger was elected seven times and failed only once. Dillon, who managed the elections, tried to introduce into France the flamboyant methods which had impressed him on a visit to the United States. An elaborate organization was established, cheap biographies, songs, photographs, letters, and insignia of all kinds were disposed of by the millions. Boulanger made a few election tours, which were successful, and some speeches in parliament, which were not. The committee met with some rather severe reverses in July, but regained everything they had lost when Boulanger won three elections at once in August, 1888. The committee then marked time until January, 1889, when Boulanger decided to stand for a vacancy in Paris. After the most exciting of all of the Boulangist campaigns, the general defeated the single candidate selected by all of the Republican groups, three to two. His thrilled followers wished to move against the presidential palace that same evening, and might have succeeded in a coup d'etat, but Boulanger refused.

The shock of the defeat of a Radical candidate in Paris, the stronghold of the Radicals, did much to destroy Radical optimism. Moreover Floquet had not been very successful as premier. He did regain some momentary popularity when he restored scrutin d'arrondissement in February, 1889, with the purpose of making the Boulangist plebiscite more difficult. The Radical party accepted the change only with reluctance. Floquet soon lost what prestige he had gained by supporting a revision of the constitution. Revision had long been on the Radical platform, but it was also supported by the Boulangists and every anti-Republican party. This was more than the Moderates could stand, and Floquet was overthrown. The new Moderate ministry was headed by Tirard but

its most important member was Constans, the minister of the interior.

Constans soon made it clear that he would maintain order. Press laws were passed, and officials who supported Boulanger lost their jobs. In March, 1889, proceedings were instituted against the Patriotic League which had been in the front rank of the general's supporters, and it was rumored that Boulanger, himself, would soon follow. A law was passed to organize the senate as a Haute Cour to try cases of conspiracy against the state. Finally, Boulanger received word that he was to be arrested; he fled immediately to Belgium. The delighted government allowed him to leave, and brought the name of the general, together with those of Rochefort and Dillon, who had fled with him, before the new high court. It is not certain how much the government knew of the relations between the committee and the Right, for the accusations were for the most part innocuous. The Moderate senate had opposed Boulanger from the beginning, and condemnation was a foregone conclusion.

The ministry proceeded further, and promulgated a law which restricted candidacy to one district. This made the Boulangist plebiscite and impossible dream. Moreover, the Radicals were discomfited and offered no opposition to the victorious Moderates. The economic situation was improving and a successful exposition in 1889 revived French prestige. The electrically lighted Eifel tower and the Shah of Persia soon outranked the departed general as favorites in the eyes of the fickle people.

Meanwhile the Boulangist party was disintegrating. Many supporters disapproved of the flight. The Belgium government soon complained, and the Boulangists moved to London. The period is marked by disorganization, dissension, and closer dependence on

the Right. Boulanger enjoyed himself in London society, but there was little competent leadership in either London or France. The Conservatives and Boulangists spent about five millions of francs on the election, and arranged for a single list of candidates, but they had little real chance of success. The election resulted in the complete failure of the Boulangist movement, for that party gained only forty seats. The Conservatives won a hundred and seventy. The eighty seats lost by the Radicals were gained by the Moderates.

Despite the defeat, the remnants of the National Committee did not give up all hope. Its last efforts were made in the Paris municipal elections of 1890, only to end in overwhelming defeat. This failure resulted in a split between the general and his committee, and in the course of the ensuing dissension, interesting revelations were made. Boulanger who had earlier moved to Jersey, had not lost his optimism, but the death of his mistress in July, 1891, caused him to commit suicide two months later.

The Boulangist episode cannot be understood without constant reference to the contemporary political situation, because without the three-cornered conflict in the chamber, Boulangism could not have become an important movement. Moreover, its entire evolution depended upon the situation of the moment; it was the essence of opportunism, and for that reason must be presented with more detail than is necessary in analyzing the periods that follow. The rapid outburst of general popularity declined with equal speed, and the movement represented the last important appearance of Caesarism in France, and the last serious effort to overthrow the government. Only a few individual Boulangists remained to cause trouble to the government. The fundamental principles of nationalism and opposition to corrupt parliamentar-

ianism were again used efficiently by the opposition only at the time of the Dreyfus affair.

The failure of Boulangism also involved the defeat of the Right and the Royalists were left without leadership or platform. They were further demoralized by two movements to accept the Republic: the establishment of a Conservative party which accepted the Republic (Republican Right), and the recognition of the republican form of government by the pope and many of the French Catholics (the ralliement).

The Moderates dominated the government during this period. In the years immediately following the Boulangist crisis, Republican concentration was invoked, and the Radicals, who had failed in the elections and as a ministry, could do nothing but accept the situation. Between 1889 and the end of 1892, the ministries changed but little in composition and among their accomplishments must be listed: a protective tariff, some measures of social reform, economic and financial progress, and the beginnings of the Franco-Russian alliance.

It is during this period that the ralliement was organized. Anticlericalism, or opposition to the participation of the church in political affairs, has a long history in France. From the beginning of the Third Republic, most Catholics were anti-Republican: some because they were monarchist in spirit and tradition; others because they objected to the anti-religious attitude of many of the Republican leaders. On the other hand, the Left was usually anti-clerical: some, because of hostility to all organized religion; others because of objections to the monarchical clericals who opposed the government. The principal anti-clerical measures down to 1885 had made education free, compulsory, and secular, and had expelled the religious orders from France. The

importance of the Radicals in the chamber of 1885 led to new laws, and the clergy retaliated by giving complete support to General Boulanger and participating in the election campaigns of 1889.

During these years Pope Leo XIII had always manifested a deep interest in the affairs of France. The welfare of the universal Catholic church was the dominant idea behind all of his actions, but he paid particular attention to the unhappy situation of the French Catholics. He believed that the root of the trouble lay in the relations between the church and the monarchical party. He hoped to sever the two groups, and create a Catholic party which would be strong enough to abolish the obnoxious anticlerical laws. He realized that this would take time, and as an immediate measure he hoped to secure the support of the Moderates, who, since the early 'eighties, had manifested a conciliatory spirit. Leo moved very slowly, because the reactionary statements of his predecessor could not be contradicted except in spirit.

The French clergy were generally unsympathetic to the ideas of the pope, and the Monarchist parties naturally opposed any action which would deprive them of their raison d'etre. The Moderates were the only group who were willing to meet the pope half-way. In return for the abandonment of opposition to the government, they were willing to refrain from additional anticlerical measures. They did, however, insist on retaining the "Republican laws" already in existence. The Radicals were furious about the new policy; they considered it only a ruse whereby the pope hoped to get control of France. The attitude of these parties was consistent throughout the period.

The first activity of the pope was indirect and unsuccessful. He then decided to have a prominent churchman speak and

selected the internationally famous Cardinal Lavignerie, archbishop of Algiers. The old churchman made a famous "toast" in which he accepted the Republic in November, 1890. Except among a few clergymen and the small Republican Right in the chamber, the speech did little but create resentment and opposition, and the relations between church and state frequently became tense despite the good-will of both Leo and the Moderates. Ultimately the pope decided to define his policy himself, and in February, 1892 issued an encyclical urging French Catholics to accept the Republic. This muzzled the clergy, and was accepted by many Catholics, but a noisy group of militants abstained and even prayed for the conversion of the pope. The Royalist parties continued to decrease, and the Republican Right grew. Consequently a new alignment begins to appear on the political scene: the Radicals, who had been so docile since 1889, objected to the ralliement, and there were signs that a rift was imminent.

The pope was also interested in social questions and certain Catholics, particularly the Comte de Mun, spent time and money in organizing the workingmen in Catholic societies. The intransigent Catholics who refused to accept the ralliement were as a rule equally opposed to Christian Socialism. The Radicals and Socialists ordinarily looked with scorn upon the Catholic policies of reform.

The Socialists also became prominent during this period. Their defeat in the Commune of 1871 delayed the growth of their political party, and it was not until 1889 that a small group of seventeen members were elected to the chamber. The Socialists were also split into several groups, the most important of which were the strict Marxist party under the capable leadership of Jules Guesde, and an independent faction who were more like extreme

Radicals, under Jean Jaures and Alexandre Millerand. In addition to a rapidly growing political party, strikes and other socialistic demonstrations were encouraged. Moreover, the doctrines and practices of anarchism gained a foothold in France during these years. The new combination of political parties, which was evident by 1893, was partly a result of this rapid spread of extreme doctrines. The Radicals, who were deeply opposed to the alliance between the Moderates and the Rallies, looked to the Left for allies and the Independent Socialists, at least were willing to go part of the way with them. Fear of Socialism made the Moderates more eager for a working agreement with the Republican Right. As a consequence, Republican concentration became discredited on all sides.

The revelations of the Panama scandal, which began in November, 1892, checked this new orientation, but only temporarily. Most of the accusations against the administrators of the Panama company, journalists and politicians were uncovered by former Boulangists, die-hard monarchists, Antisemites, and intransigent Catholics. The Republicans did band together, and only one politician, the sole defendant who confessed his guilt, was sentenced by the courts. The attack by the Right was not well-organized, however, and was, on the whole, ineffective. By the late spring of 1893, when the campaigns for the elections were at their peak, the Republicans were again at each other's throats. The Panama Affair cannot be considered as one of the great crises of France: its sole political results were the elimination of certain Republican leaders, and an increase in the Socialist representation. In the elections of 1893, the Republicans gained a greater majority than ever before. The Moderates made the largest numerical increase; the Socialists secured the great proportional

gain. The Rallie campaigns were not very successful, and their leaders did not win majorities. The greatly decimated Right were furious and blamed their defeat on the pope.

The political conflict in the chamber of 1893 was almost entirely between Republicans. Since many of the Radical leaders had lost their seats in the elections, the most effective opposition came from the excellent Socialist orators. Although the Socialists deputies were divided on questions of policy, the formulation of a minimum program welded them into a significant party.

Although the Moderates were in control during the period from 1893 to 1895, their policies were sufficiently vacillating to create ministerial instability. Jean Casimir-Ferrier, a wealthy capitalist, was the most important of their leaders, and held consecutively the posts of president of the chamber, premier, and president of the Republic. During his ministry the alliance with the Rallies was consolidated by the manifestation of a "new spirit" (esprit nouveau) with respect to the Right. A revival of anarchist outrages were severely repressed. Upon the assassination of President Carnot in June, 1894, Casimir-Ferrier was elected president of the Republic. A campaign against him by the Radicals and Socialists, combined with the discrepancy between his vigorous personality and the neutral position the president was supposed to occupy, caused his resignation in January, 1895.

After a short and not especially successful interlude during which a Radical ministry held office, Meline, a leading Moderate became premier. He established a homogeneous Moderate ministry which lasted for two years. His general policy was based on the repression of socialism and conciliation of the church.

The Radicals and Socialists never relaxed their opposition, and the Journal officiel of these years records little more than the details of this gruelling struggle.

The other important factors during this period are the prevalence of scandal and the fear of treason. Antisemitism became widespread among the Catholics and was fostered by revelations of financial scandals. The Rallies and the Moderates worked well together; this was the golden age of the esprit nouveau. The occasional stupid blunders of some of the Catholics and the activities of the refractories cast fuel on the flame of anti-clericalism, but, in general, Catholicism was on the upward path. Schools and churches multiplied, and the congregations were permitted to return, pilgrimages, retreats, and the cult of saints and miracles became widespread. The revival was intellectual as well as popular and many of the leaders in French thought and letters supported the authority and position of the Catholic church. Some even became converts. The Radicals and Independent Socialists redoubled their efforts to counteract this situation.

The intensification of nationalism was also a characteristic of this period. That spirit had not been absent from the Third Republic; it had been nursed by the Radicals from the beginning. Their alliance with the internationalist Socialists, however, had changed their platform, and the Right became the great advocates of nationalism. Although Conservative opposition in the chamber practically disappeared, a new opposition, based on nationalism, opposition to the parliamentary government, Catholicism, and Antisemitism appeared. In the beginning the group was scattered and its leaders were not especially prominent, but after the turn of the century, these policies were organized into the strong Action française.

Contemporaries noted the reaction of the period of Meline. The growth of the new conservatism, the coöperation between the Moderates and the Rallies, the religious revival, the alliance with autocratic Russia, and the monarchical airs assumed by President Felix Faure after his voyages to foreign countries, were adequate evidence of this.

Both the Moderate-Rallie and Radical-Socialist combinations hoped that the elections of the spring of 1898 would settle the conflict in their favor, but the Dreyfus case intervened. The conviction of the Jewish captain for treason in December, 1894, created little opposition at the time, but later revelations which pointed to the guilt of Major Esterhazy resulted in the formation of a small group who believed that Dreyfus was innocent (December, 1897). The terms "Dreyfusard" and "Anti-Dreyfusard" did not correspond absolutely with the political parties. In general the Left did not believe in guilt, while the Right upheld it firmly, but there were many exceptions to the rule, and considerable variation within each party. Even among the earliest supporters of Dreyfus, Moderates, Radicals, and Socialists were mixed together. Moreover, the intellectual leaders of France who had hitherto remained aloof from direct participation in French politics, engaged actively in this affair. Many of the historians and other prominent academic figures gave their adherence to the cause of Dreyfus, and the support of such writers as Emile Zola and Anatole France was almost invaluable.

Many of the earliest Dreyfusards were interested in the individual error, and desired only the rehabilitation of the condemned man. To others, the affair became a "Cause." Still others believed the entire Revolutionary tradition was being challenged. A few young students correlated the case with classical tragedies,

and their defense of Dreyfus possessed a mystical element. Finally, many politicians used the affair as a lever to remove the Moderate-Rallie combination from control of the government. The Dreyfusards developed a marvelous system of publicity, and concentrated on uncovering facts which would lead to a revision of the trial.

The anti-Dreyfusards were also divided. A few literary men from the anti-Revolutionary and anti-scientific group became prominent opponents of Dreyfus. Most of the Boulangist Nationalists and the antisemites as a body advanced quickly to the forefront of the struggle. The dispute gradually assumed a religious character, and, while most of the Jews and Protestants supported the condemned captain, the large majority of the Catholics became opponents of a revision of his trial. Some Radicals, more Moderates, and most of the Conservatives were also aligned against Dreyfus. This anti-Dreyfusard group had the support of an almost unanimous public opinion from the beginning. Their policies were not clearly defined, they merely wished to leave the original decision in the Dreyfus trial unaltered.

The attitude of the army has been severely criticized, and certainly the higher officers were not only very lax in the first trial, but did everything in their power, using both legal and illegal methods, to prevent the truth from being made known. The Moderate ministries in control manifested little heroism in the affair. The premier and president gave little enough attention to the first trial and later refused to tell what they knew about the case. Meline was distressed that the elections of 1898 should be disturbed and claimed that the decision was a legal fact (chose jugée) and not to be changed. The chamber followed his lead, and the senate was also anti-revisionist.

The Dreyfus affair was only a minor factor in the elections of 1898, which scarcely changed the numerical alignments of the parties. The continued opposition of the Left caused Meline's resignation in May. The Radical ministry which succeeded was dominated by its minister of war, who proclaimed the guilt of Dreyfus from the tribune and read corroborating documents which he expected would end the agitation forever.

Shortly after, the head of the intelligence department of the general staff, which had handled the case from the beginning confessed that he had forged the principal documents read in the chamber. This proved to be the turning point in the affair, for the ministry decided to submit the case to the Court of Cassation, the highest French court of appeal, to decide whether there was adequate evidence for the revision of the original trial.

This incident did not close the affair, for the two sides seemed more determined than ever to make their ideas prevail. The Dreyfusards began to criticise the army and the church, and insisted that they were defending the principles of the Revolution against authority. On the other hand, the anti-Dreyfusards called their opponents "traitors" and insisted that the morale of the army should not be destroyed. They further claimed that the Dreyfusard group was not inherently French: that it was a combination of Jews, Protestants and Freemasons who wanted to get control of the country. They objected because the welfare of a single individual was permitted to endanger the unity of France, and loudly insisted that an authoritarian system was needed to put an end to the crisis.

Chaos reigned in the chamber as the months passed by. The struggle was as bitter as any that had preceded it in France, and even the Court of Cassation's decision in favor of revision in

June, 1899, did not clarify the situation. A poorly planned, unsuccessful coup d'etat, by the Nationalists and Orleanists in February, 1899, only added to the constant rumors of conspiracies. Demonstrations against the revisionist President, Loubet, who had succeeded the anti-revisionist Faure when the latter died suddenly in February, 1899, only increased the tension.

In June, 1899, Waldeck-Rousseau, a Moderate, constituted a cabinet which proved strong enough to handle the situation. When the second military trial again condemned Dreyfus, the premier pardoned him, and severely punished administrative and military officials who had openly opposed the captain. He also brought many of the agitating Nationalists, Antisemites, and Orleanists before the Haute Cour for treason. In addition, he adopted the Radical plank of anticlericalism, and before the end of 1899, he promised additional measures against the congregations and religious education.

Waldeck-Rousseau was a Moderate, but he was also an opportunist. The Moderate party had split in two sections. About a hundred under Meline, continued to advocate conservatism and an alliance with the Rallies. The remainder turned to the Radicals and Republican union again became the order of the day. The Radicals had long struggled to secure the power; now that they had it, they exaggerated the danger of the conspiracies against the state and claimed that their support of Dreyfus had saved the Republic and the honor of France. Public opinion had veered around to agree with them. The Radicals insisted on reprisals, and secured them, mainly at the expense of the church. Leo XIII's efforts at conciliation did not suffice to prevent this, for the majority of Catholics had vociferously supported the losing side in the Dreyfus case. Some of the Socialists, chiefly the inde-

pendents, also joined the Republican alliance, and one of their leaders, Millerand, was included in the ministry. But the strict Marxians protested against this coöperation with the bourgeois parties. The resulting schism persisted, but, on the whole, the Dreyfus agitation greatly strengthened the Socialist parties.

The spectacular character of these incidents has tended to obscure the conclusions which can be drawn from them. The period is not nearly so much a unit as it is ordinarily considered. These years involved a great struggle between the Right and the Left in which the participants and the platforms varied. The first crisis which centered around Boulanger was purely political and was primarily an attempt to overthrow the government. The second phase of the conflict was connected with the ralliement and was an effort to control rather than destroy the Republic. After the Radicals had captured the government as a result of the Dreyfus affair, a newer group reorganized Conservative theory and tried to dominate French intellectual life.

In addition, there is also a struggle among the various Republican factions, particularly the Radicals and the Moderates. The first conflict between these two permitted the rise of General Boulanger. The Moderates solved that problem and secured the support of the Radicals by invoking Republican concentration. When the growth of Socialism caused the Moderates to turn to the Right for support, the disgusted Radicals sought help from the Socialists. These parties of the Left led a constant opposition while the Moderate-Rallie combination controlled the government (1893-1898). The Dreyfus affair changed the balance, split the Moderates and created a Republican bloc in which the Radicals were predominant.

The difficulty of securing a parliamentary majority be-

cause of the many political factions caused opportunism and expediency to be important factors in French politics during these years. On the whole there was little change in the French government, but this was not a sterile period in the history of France, because commerce, industry, and agriculture increased, a large colonial empire was established, and the isolation of France in Europe was broken down.

The history of this period is not at all complete. The composition of the parties needs to be studied more thoroughly, and the connection between economic and social conditions and politics ought to be investigated. Foreign policy, also, has never been adequately connected with the internal situation.

There is a considerable amount of material available on the parties of this period. Of the general treatments, most of which can be considered as contemporary accounts, those by Seignobos and Bourgeois are the best, but neither is adequate. Only the intransigent Right, however, has failed to leave a history of its party. Moreover, practically every group has published at least one account of all of the important movements and crises. The desire to justify a particular party or to make accusation against another has made available a remarkable amount of detail. Several collections of speeches are available; those of Boulanger, the Comte de Mun, Jules Ferry, and Waldeck-Rousseau are the most valuable. Over two dozen collections of memoirs exist, as well as thirty-five biographies of important figures written by contemporaries. Moreover, there are innumerable contemporary articles written by participants and witnesses published in French and English periodicals. Newspaper material would have made the task easier, but aside from the invaluable London Times, was not available.

The difficulty for the student lies not in the lack of sources but in their character. The primary purpose of this kind of evidence is always propagandist; and because of their great love for all-inclusive systems, French material has to be used with more than ordinary care. Each political group had its own philosophy and its own interpretation of each of these crises in the history of the Third Republic. All facts are arranged to fit in with the system; details that cannot be used in this manner are cast aside as irrelevant. The only official documents available are the debates of the French chamber and they can be understood only after a careful study of party relationships. The best foreign comments on this period were made by Englishmen, but, on the whole, they are unduly pessimistic.

